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INTERNATIONAL BUREAU REPORTS ON SUCCESS OF THE 2000 WORLD RADIO COMMUNICATIONS CONFERENCE (WRC-2000)

Washington, DC – The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) participated as part of the United States delegation to the 2000 World Radiocommunication Conference in Istanbul, Turkey, which concluded last Friday, June 2. The month-long Conference, held every two to three years under the auspices of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), reached agreement on several major spectrum-related issues.

The U.S. Delegation was headed by Ambassador Gail S. Schoettler and consisted of delegates from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), the Department of State, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, and other Federal agencies, and 157 delegates from private industry.

The U.S. delegation included Commissioners Susan Ness and Harold Furchtgott-Roth and FCC International Bureau Chief Donald Abelson, as well as Damon Ladson, the Vice Chair of the U.S. delegation. Nine FCC staff members were in Istanbul for the entire month-long meeting. The U.S. delegation has returned with a long list of accomplishments that will help ensure commercial successes, create new jobs, increase global competition and clear the way for speedy introduction of emerging technologies.

Three particularly noteworthy success were agreements which:

- Facilitate the development of technology for wireless phones that not only are able to call to anywhere from anywhere, but are also able to access the Internet from anywhere on Earth;

- Develop policies designed to maximize use of the spectrum to provide new services, both terrestrial and satellite, to people throughout the world; and

- Finalize sharing arrangements that permit satellite services more flexibility in sharing spectrum, which should result in the introduction of new services and more competition.

William E. Kennard, chairman of the FCC, said, "This was a very productive WRC. As a result of the decisions reached in Istanbul in the last month, all nations of the world are closer to enjoying the benefits of the Information Age. I want to acknowlege in a special way the hard work of Ambassador Schoettler and the rest of the U.S. delegation, including Commissioners Susan Ness and Harold Furchtgott-Roth."

FCC Commissioner Susan Ness said, “WRC-2000 should be remembered not just for the excellent results achieved on wireless and satellite matters globally, but for the well-prepared, cohesive and effective work of the entire United States delegation. I commend Ambassador Schoettler for her leadership. I am particularly proud of the FCC staff, both in Istanbul and at home, who did such an outstanding job."

FCC Commissioner Harold-Furchtgott-Roth said, “I am very proud of the fine work of the FCC staff who have prepared for two years for the World Radio Conference. They and the U.S. government staff ably represented the United States on technical and legal issues alike. The entire U.S. delegation also benefited from the superb leadership of Ambassador Gail Schoettler. The final result of the conference is that U.S. interests and the interests of consumers around the world have been advanced."

The major issues debated at this conference were: (1) identification of international frequency bands for third-generation wireless mobile communications systems (IMT-2000), (2) sharing of spectrum between satellite networks in non-geostationary satellite orbits (NGSO) and geostationary satellite orbits (GSO), (3) sharing issues between satellite and terrestrial radio services in the 37-43.5 GHz band (V-Band), (4) additional frequencies for Global Positioning System (GPS), (5) re-planning of the broadcasting-satellite service frequency bands in Regions 1 and 3, and (6) the use of the 4 and 6 GHz fixed-satellite service bands by earth stations on vessels while in foreign waters or ports.

The United States was successful in achieving a flexible international multi-band approach for third-generation wireless mobile communications services (e.g., cellular and personal communication services). These services are internationally referred to as “IMT-2000.” The identification of spectrum for IMT-2000 is contained in five footnotes and resolutions. These cover: (1) currently identified, (2) 806-960 MHz, (3) bands above 1 GHz (1710-1885 MHz and 2500-2690 MHz), (4) the satellite component and (5) High Altitude Platform Stations. Additional resolutions emphasize that administrations must have flexibility to determine the timing and availability of bands to be used for IMT-2000 in order to meet particular marketplace needs.

With regard to sharing of spectrum between satellite networks in non-geostationary satellite orbits (NGSO) and geostationary satellite orbits (GSO), the United States achieved a global compromise that will allow for the competitive entry of NGSO systems into the Ku-band, while protecting existing GSO links.

In the V-Band, the U.S. achieved the key goal of obtaining 2GHz (40-42 GHz) of spectrum globally for the fixed satellite services (FSS). This represents the last near-term “frontier” for the deployment of global satellite systems. Additionally, the U.S. negotiated a compromise that protects existing high-density deployment of terrestrial fixed services (such as

those providing competition to local exchange carriers) and also provides for future deployment of new terrestrial services. Finally, as part of theV-Band compromise, the U.S. achieved globally harmonized spectrum for terrestrial and satellite services.

For GPS, the U.S. secured additional spectrum for the enhancement of the U.S. GPS system, and was able to block the provision of additional for the mobile-satellite service near the frequency bands used by GPS systems.

Compromise was also achieved on replanning for broadcast satellite services (BSS) in Regions 1 and 3. The new plan gives 10 analog channels to countries in Europe and Africa and 12 channels for Asia and Australia. The agreement protects U.S. FSS that are operational but still waiting in a backlog of pending ITU applications to receive full clearance.

Finally, the U.S. agreed to a resolution relating to the operation of ship earth stations in the 4 and 6 GHz bands in foreign waters and ports.

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